

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Philip S. Hammond, Chairman (2006)
John I. Lebeaux, Vice-Chairman (2007)
Bruce R. Card, Clerk (2008)
Maurice M. DePalo (2008)
Thomas A. Fiore (2007)

MEETINGS

The Board of Selectmen meets in open session on Monday evenings at 7:00 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in the Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building. Meetings are generally held on alternate Mondays, though are occasionally scheduled at other times and places as circumstances dictate. At these meetings the Board conducts the general business of the Town of Shrewsbury pursuant to the Town Charter and the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Board met thirty-eight times in open session in 2005.

The meeting schedule, agenda, and minutes are available by visiting or contacting the Selectmen's Office (508-841-8504) or by accessing the Town's Internet Website (www.shrewsbury-ma.gov). The regular meetings are broadcast live on Shrewsbury Government Access Channel 30 and are replayed at other times for public convenience.

The Board also holds special meetings and workshops. In March it held its Annual Legislative Meeting with Congressman James P. McGovern, State Senator Edward M. Augustus, Jr., and State Representative Karyn E. Polito. This meeting allows the Board and other Town officials to discuss with the Town's legislators how various federal and state policies and programs affect the Town of Shrewsbury. This meeting continues to be an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas, and a wonderful opportunity to convey local concerns to our legislators.

The Board also regularly conducts workshop sessions at which it reviews particular issues with the Town Manager and appropriate Department Heads. In 2005 the Board held workshop sessions on Public Works Priorities and Financial Issues.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Board continues to produce a cable access television program, *Selectmen's Roundtable*, on a regular basis. The program's purpose is to allow the Board to present to the public issues concerning the Town in a more informal manner than at the regular meetings. This program is seen at various times on Shrewsbury Public Access Channel 30. New programs air every two weeks.

BOARD MEMBERS

At the Annual Town Election on May 2, 2005 Bruce R. Card and Maurice M. DePalo were each re-elected to the Board of Selectmen for a three-year term. At its first meeting after the election the Board organized as follows: Philip S. Hammond, Chairman; John I. Lebeaux, Vice-Chairman; Bruce R. Card, Clerk.

TOWN MANAGER

The Board conducted its Annual Evaluation of the Town Manager in August. Town Manager Daniel J. Morgado's overall performance was judged to be excellent to distinguished. Particularly noted was Mr. Morgado's management of the Fiscal Year 2006 budget cycle. In addition to the very strong command of countless financial variables which he has demonstrated in this and previous years, the Board recognized the high degree of sensitivity and compassion that Mr. Morgado employed through this very difficult budget cycle.

In November the Board unanimously voted to sign a new employment contract between Mr. Morgado and the Town extending his term of service as Town Manager by three years to September 30, 2009.

Mr. Morgado and the entire community benefit greatly from Assistant Town Manager Michael R. Hale's participation in our local government. Mr. Hale is a highly skilled and tremendously effective administrator.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES

As the executive body of the Town, the Board of Selectmen oversees the policies of our municipal government. It conducts hearings as the Local Licensing Authority, acts as Appointing Authority, acts as both Road and Water Commissioners, and proposes legislation to the Town Meeting throughout the year. Items of particular note for the year 2005 are listed below.

Winter Maintenance on Unaccepted Subdivision Streets

In January 2005 the Board implemented a new policy effective November 15, 2005 changing how the Town will provide winter maintenance services on subdivision streets that have not been accepted by town meeting as public ways. Unlike most nearby communities, the Town of Shrewsbury had traditionally provided at municipal expense the exact same level of service to unaccepted subdivision streets as it provides to accepted ones. The Board noted that it in a few cases developers were simply not bringing their projects up to town standards suitable for acceptance in a timely manner. The unfinished components were often a source of great frustration to the residents of these streets while at the same time the developer enjoyed years of full-service winter maintenance at no cost.

The Board's policy placed the entire responsibility of the winter maintenance of unaccepted subdivision streets on the private developer. In the event the developer fails to provide adequate maintenance the policy allows the Town to provide the service and bill the developer. As of this writing there have been several snowstorms and the developers have performed very well. To date the policy has been successful.

The Board expects that the implementation of the policy will act as an incentive for developers to complete their projects more quickly so that the Town will be able to accept the streets and take over the responsibility of the winter maintenance.

Private ways that were in existence prior to the acceptance of the Subdivision Rules and Regulations by the Town of Shrewsbury (April 15, 1954) are not subject to this policy.

Sale of 52 Holden Street

The Town purchased in 1999 four single-family residences as part of the land acquisition necessary to construct Shrewsbury High School. Three of the homes had to be demolished as part of the required site work. Though the property at 52 Holden Street was subject to drastic re-grading and easements, it was not necessary to demolish the house. Once the High School project substantially concluded the Board determined to sell the property.

After failing to receive a single bid after twice offering the property for sale by sealed bid, the Board received authorization from the February 16, 2005 Special Town Meeting to submit to the General Court a Home Rule Petition so that the Town could sell the property by public auction.

Upon approval by the General Court the Board issued a Request for Proposals seeking auctioneer services. The low bidder was Paul Zekos of The Zekos Group. Mr. Zekos, a Shrewsbury resident, offered his services to the Town at what was essentially an arrangement that would at best only cover his company's expenses. The agreement was that the auctioneer was to have total responsibility for the administration of the auction including all advertising.

The auction took place in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in town hall on October 15, 2005. Forty-one individuals registered as bidders by posting a \$10,000 bank draft and over two hundred people attended. After a spirited bidding process conducted by Mr. Zekos, the winning bid was for \$290,850. The Town's net proceeds were \$285,614 which will be applied to the bond issued for the original purchase of the property.

The Board wishes to publicly recognize the efforts of Paul Zekos and The Zekos Group for the highly professional manner in which they conducted the entire process.

Municipal Budget

The Fiscal Year 2006 Budget proposed to the Annual Town Meeting did not provide the same levels of municipal service that had been provided in previous years as increasing demand for services exceeded revenue growth. The Board voted to ask the community if it wished to maintain service levels through a supplemental budget of \$1,500,000 that was proposed to Town Meeting contingent upon a successful Proposition 2-1/2 Override vote at the June 6, 2005 Special Town Election.

The supplemental budget request included \$865,862 for school operations. The remainder was proposed to increase the budgets for the Highway, Library, Parks and Recreation, Police, and Public Buildings departments. The proposed \$198,000 supplemental increases in the Parks and Public Buildings budgets were substantially dedicated to the support those departments provide for the care and maintenance of the school facilities

The Proposition 2-1/2 Override question was defeated by the voters 4,797-2,451 with 36% of registered voters participating. Following the vote all the municipal departments continued to offer the highest possible delivery of the services that available funding allowed.

Fire Department Equipment and Facilities

Two major issues regarding the Fire Department continued throughout 2005. Among the comments in his comprehensive November, 2001 *Ten Year Strategic Plan 2002-2012* Fire Chief Gerald F. LaFlamme reported that Fire Headquarters on Church Road needed replacement. According to the Chief, the building, constructed in 1927, could not effectively and efficiently function. Chief LaFlamme also reported that the present aerial ladder truck (originally purchased 1962, engine/chassis replaced 1986) would also need replacement. The Chief proposed that the Town address these issues in Fiscal 2004.

The Board delayed moving ahead at that time, largely in consideration of budgetary pressures. At the May, 2004 Annual Town Meeting a Fire Station Building Committee was authorized. Selectman Card is the Board's representative and chairman of that committee.

The Board placed a Proposition 2-1/2 Capital Exclusion Question on the May 2, 2005 Annual Town Election ballot to purchase a new aerial ladder truck for \$775,000. It was the Board's intent to quickly pay off the bond and apply to the municipal budget an equal amount from the School Bond Interest Account.

The question was defeated 951-844. As the ballot question preceded the Annual Town Meeting, the Meeting subsequently defeated a warrant article seeking appropriation to purchase the truck.

By fall the Fire Station Building Committee made its recommendation that the Town demolish the existing Fire Headquarters and the nearby existing Cemetery Department garage, construct a new Fire Headquarters behind the site of the present building, construct a new Cemetery Department garage on the west side of Boylston Street near its intersection with Boylston Circle, and renovate Station #2 on Harrington Ave.

The Board proposed an appropriation of \$6,650,000 to fund the recommendations of the Fire Station Building Committee and an appropriation of \$800,000 for the purchase of an aerial ladder truck to the October 11, 2005 Special Town Meeting. Both questions were approved by the Special Town Meeting.

A Special Town Election was held on November 8, 2005 with the two necessary Proposition 2-1/2 Debt Exclusion questions on the ballot. Question One (Fire and Cemetery Departments facilities) was defeated by a vote of 2,315-2,285. Question Two (aerial ladder truck) was approved 2,866-1,740.

There is presently no fire station that can accommodate an aerial truck of the size proposed by the chief. At this writing the Board and the Building Committee are

exploring what future steps to take to find a proposal that the voters will support to fill the critical need to house the truck in a location where it can best serve the community and to address the existing facilities problems.

School Building Projects

The Town is in the final stages of both the Shrewsbury High School and the Oak Middle School building projects. The High School-Middle School Building Committee faced many challenges with both projects including unexpected site conditions, bankruptcies of two general contractors, and a major fire. In spite of these significant obstacles the Building Committee has overseen both the construction of a new high school and the wonderful transformation of the former high school building into a middle school. Each school is beautiful and highly functional and both should serve the town very well for many years. It is anticipated that both projects will conclude in 2006.

The Sherwood Middle School Building Committee did not meet in 2005 as it awaits the Massachusetts School Building Authority to end its moratorium on funding new projects and to set forth its regulations on the new process for state participation in school building projects.

Selectman DePalo represents the Board on the High School-Middle School Building Committee and Selectman Lebeaux serves on the Sherwood Middle School Building Committee.

Water and Sewer Issues

The Town continues to have very significant issues relating to both public water supply and wastewater management.

In order for the community to thrive it must have adequate public water supply for its residents and businesses and appropriate capacity to treat and discharge wastewater.

Future economic development, which the Board believes is absolutely critical in order to provide the additional revenues necessary to provide services to the community, is limited by the community's ability to provide all necessary utilities.

The Town has for many years made tremendous investments of resources into the necessary infrastructure to provide these critical basic services and has done so in a fiscally responsible and environmentally respectful manner, yet the Board continues to find an increasingly more restrictive set of regulatory mandates. There is much disagreement throughout Massachusetts if these mandates will truly provide any real environmental benefits. In spite of the town's investment in a program of best management practices including many conservation measures, the Board is very concerned that the real results of these regulatory mandates will be an overall degradation in the level of municipal services the Town can deliver.

CLOSING

Overall, the year 2005 was a successful one for the Town of Shrewsbury. The employees of the Town, the Department Heads, supervisors, and line personnel continue to efficiently deliver a very high level of services to the community. The volunteer efforts of the various boards, committees, and commissions maintain the will of the townspeople. Everyone should be grateful for all these individuals' willingness to offer their time and service to improve the community. Please refer to their individual reports for detailed information about their activities.

The Board would be remiss if it did not take note of the numerous donations and gifts made to the Town by many of its residents and local businesses. These gifts and donations add to the quality of life of every member of this community. The Board wishes to extend its sincere gratitude on behalf of the Town to each and every resident and business that was willing to do something extra to make Shrewsbury a better place to live and work.

The Board constantly depends on the staff of the combined Offices of the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager so that it may properly discharge its duties and responsibilities. Along with Mr. Morgado and Mr. Hale, Janice McCoy, secretary to the Board of Selectmen and Paula Brady, secretary to the Town Manager continue to provide the highest level of support.

Respectfully Submitted,
Board of Selectmen